

Minutes of Meeting
Trail County Economic Development Marketing Committee
February 16, 2023 – 6 p.m.
TCEDC Conference Room/Zoom Video Conference Call

Present: Committee Members – AJ Andresen, Dr. Brian Van Horn, Cassie Braaten and Judd Wilson. Also present – Jim Murphy, Executive Director and Alyssa Short – Deputy Director.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Committee Chair Van Horn.

Van Horn explained the beautification mini-grant program for the new committee members. The group discussed the suggested revisions to the guidelines and application, whether to add a prioritization list and sticking to the preapproved budget to free up funds for other programs.

Murphy suggested expanding the program to include infrastructure repairs and Short asked what “infrastructure” would include and whether to extend the program to cover interior improvements, as well.

Van Horn raised the question of whether the group should set aside some of the funds for larger projects with a wider public impact and potentially longer lifespan. Short said she and Murphy had discussed whether a separate pool could be put together for a public spaces grant, with the group awarding two or three larger (around \$5,000) matching grants for would put together some guidelines for a public spaces/community engagement grant, and they’ll look at pulling together \$10,000 or \$15,000 for two or three \$5,000 grants. This could potentially help municipalities, park boards, etc. with the matching portion required to obtain some of the larger grants from the state and other agencies.

Based on increasing participating – and the fact that both Short and Braaten said they’ve already received several inquiries about the grant program opening – the committee decided to move forward with recommending a business improvement mini-grant program and a separate public spaces grant program, the former geared toward businesses with storefronts and the latter for livability and community-enhancement purposes. They’ll create a draft of the guidelines and send them to the committee for review and approval before bringing them to the board in March.

Murphy asked about updating the primary sector training grant program to a business training/certification grant, which would be open to a wider variety of businesses. The committee agreed to the recommendation.

Short discussed marketing priorities for the year – website updates, event and program marketing, potentially looking at a Partners in Planning grant.

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

